11/2/71

Dear Ed,

Appreciate your taking to time to phone last night about Jerry. Glad that he came out of it okay. It will be a blow to him because that was so fine a car. He'll get little from insurance and he'll be going into debt to get another car. As I told him once, I look back upon my self of those years and I wonder I survived my own driving. The roads were worse then, but the traffic was so much lighter. I'd often beat express trains in a Model A Ford, w ich is hardly bragging or good sense.

I got up early to work on a book, but first I want to address the other purpose of your call. You are correct in the political angles. In fact, you are almost the only one who writes me in that context, so much is it lost on people. I entirely agree. I do not think it can achieve marketplace acceptability not because such a book won't seel but because I'm satisfied it won't have a chance to.

I did much thinking in those thousands of Jersey Turnpike and JFK Memorial Highway miles I drove beteen home and NYC in the great futility of seeking commercial publication for Whitewash. I'd usually leave home a little after four a.m., after I'd been staying up most of the week and living with a friend in Forrest Hills. This let me get to NYC by the time offices were opening and to park my car at the end of the Lincoln Tunnel for $1.50 for the whole day. Then I'd leave supper time and drive home. Long and difficult days. I then decided, rightly or wrongly, that the only way that approach could be successful is in the form of a novel. There simply is no publisher who will make the required investment. Or, in other terms in which we must think, run the risk.

I once came close, very close. It is only an accident that this didn't come off in 1965, before the media got uptight. It was at Pocket Books. Their senior editor read WW over night. He couldn't out it down. The next day he told me that with my background, their p.r. knowhow and the content of the book within a year I'd be one of the best-known laymen in the ~~xxxxxxx~~ country and they'd have another Green Felt Jungle (which is how I learned it was the best-selling book of 1964). What killed it is legit, Shimkin's concern over what the DJ would do to him under the Calories Don't Count indictments. I think, ultimately, that six did go to jail, not including him. They were, or at least this editor was (as I found so many) very honest. He describe the owner's situation as that of a red flag facing a charging bull. However, he did not give up. He undertook, with the clear understanding volunteered by him, to seek other publication. He first explained to me his importance to other publishers, saying he usually decided on what to buy from the hardbackers. He decided on Doubleday. In my presence he phoned and demanded that the book be read by one Sam Vaughn, unknown to me but he said Nixon's and Eisenhower's editor there. Doubleday read it and resplied in a week. You know how fast that is: Our decision was not editorial and not easy to arrive at. Separately, the editorial assistant told me they'd have had a better chance to go for it if they could have faulted it, i.e., had something to apologize for later or have a basis for not being as worried about the reaction. They had a high-policy meeting of the top execs on it. Matter of fact, when I called Ken McVormick about something a year later (and we have never met), his secretary still remembered my name. ...Collins in London went for it. Sparrow killed it with phoney criticism. I later learned, and I shut him up at the time of his booklet and the wide attention it got, that he has longtime British Intel. connections, at the very least as a long-time recruiter. My Congressman was and remains a good friend. He tried hard. He even went and had a meeting with the top staff of the Wash. Post over it. They doublecrossed him. He tried to get Manny Celler (he was a member of the Judiciary Committee Manny heads) interested. I could go on and on. What the bright and deeply concerned younger ones like Jerry, who is great, and we have become deeply fond of him just do not know and can't rationalize is that I have to live with my own experiences. I know that things can be done. If O&D had made the normal effort with Frame-Up, it could have done much. They assured me they would and I believed them. They killed the book in the womb. When they mixed my doing anything in Memphis the end of February (and the book was due out the previous

Septe,ber), when I was ready to go to jail to defy a court order imposing silence (on everyone bu the government and the prosecution), they saw to it that I didn't even have a set of proofs. I knew all I had to know then. It makes no real difference whether the publisher is reached. What counts is is performance,not whether it is inspired or dominated. When they refused to hold a press conference on publication, what little doubt I then had was eliminated. And, aside from what they owe me for non-performance, they today owe me $4,200 and I've got less than $15.00 to my name.

Of the hundreds of other cases I could cite, I'll give you two: Feltrinelli asked me to do a cutting, slashing J'Accuse, of the kind you postulate. What the hell good would it have done me when it took me four years to get an accounting from him and it is a phoney one. I got only the advance, and that after some trouble. Yet I knew from friends in Italian publishing that his edition of WHITEWASH was sold out before publication, and he accounts for only that single printing? Dell turned WW down three times then came to me for it. Their first prints was 250,000, they repronted twice in the first month, I have a copy of a fourth printing they do not admit having made, and they claim to have sold a total of less than 1700,000 in all. I have affidavits they filed in a spurious suit filed by Bringuier which as of that time account for something like 300,000 copies. When they kept after me for WW II they then told the agent I then had, and this was about early Feb. 1967, that they had sold 435,000 copies.

Now how much more do I need to know? But let me tell you another, for as you know, I keep working and don't take time for letters unless they are necessaary. When I was working in N.O. I knew a kooky chick who occasionally dated Layton Martens, whose lawyer, as I recall told several local reporters who told me that although he'd deny it if they used it that he was being paid by the Agency. My own investigation of Martens, only barely indicated in O in NO, showed he was second in command, more or less (his words) of the CRC, and it was then CIA-funded. Well, I got pretty close with this girl. One night she told me that LM had told her that I had done a foolish think, and he laughed and laughed about it. He went to one of our publishers, M said, and he named it. The name meant nothing to this girl. But she could remember the first initial, P. For Praeger. And it was correct. The guy under P also read the ms over night and flipped. But P wouldn't go for it. His reason: I'm not a recognized scholar! Nor list of PhD's, etc.

So, unpleasant as it is, I live with the realities. And despite them I try to make a record. I also live with the childish chiding of the young ones over my writing. There is no problem with it, because the publishers all have editors. The onlt editing I've had has been disasterous. It was that way with O in NO and with F-U, where the necessary contraction of the front end was of Bismarckian character, with every possible redundancy added and then to break it up more, inside parens when they were usually not needed. Writing is like beauty in the eye. It is in the mind. No two publishers edit the same way. I have editors tell me how they enjoy some of my phrasing, the irony, the sarcasm. I had no single serious adverse editorial criticism of WW in the more than 100 submissions and many went out of their way to say it was good writing, not the easiest thing to do in rejecting. It is much easier to just say it isn't for us. I easte hours trying to satisfiy the Jerrys, who I like, because they are the product of sausage-factory teaching, don't recognize that writing is an individual thing or that a writer can produce only his way, and that edit9ng is a separate profession well-staffed with many people who can change the writing the way any piblisher wants. The writing has never been a problem, least of all in the comment I've had from the professionals. The opposite, in fact, has sometimes been the case, as in a very long piece in the Tulane Review. Last I heard of it that English prof was doing a novel aboyt me!

I must have ta least six more books started and in various stages. I donot mean just researched or in mind. I've got some done that nobody will ever see because they now serve no purpose. I can ream it out faster than a pulper, and when you consider the magnitude of the literary bite I've taken I have to. It did the first version of COUP I in three days. That's better than 10,000 words a day. No the best way to write, but an indication of capability. And it stacks. It is here, by the way, in what had to be edited out, that I said

what you went said. And none of our learned or younger brethren had a word of comment!

I have taken this time because I know, appreciate your concern. When you've had no income for seven years, are loaded with problems, have an indebtedness greater than the assessed value of your property and the buying of a roll of stamps is a major logistical problem- and have so mjuchm material in hand that in three years of the most intensive work you can't get it all done in rough draft, you have a separate sense of the realities. My young friends can't understand this. It is foreign to their experiences. I doubt too many of them could produce anything under such circumstances. And I haven't begun to indicate the pther and pressing problems part of our daily lives.

There is no other critic who is not in a position to be of help and no one who has. Except for a couple of the really great (to me) kids. Sometimes one of them will send me a $5.00 check. That means so much! The rich ones screw me. Epstein, Lane, Flammode, Thompson and other, notoriously the oncompetent Turner, plagiarized wholesale and went around defaming me. Millionaires owe me money. JG about $1,000. Just about all the committees of various kind. Penn Jones-whose wife is rich and wants him to pay and he won't. Here again I could go on and on. For example, at the importuning of California critics, who were suffering because of Lane's stupidity, telling Liebeler in public that he'd sue Liebeler for calling him a liar, I abandoned WWII on publication and went out there to tackle Liebeler. I have silenced him twice, the second time seemingly permanently and that was, perhaps, my worst single night (I also had a very bad morning once!). To this day those ruch cats have yet to repay my travel expenses. One was Maggie Fields, whose husband is a Hutton partner. And what did Lane do? Crib my stuff in his second book too (he also did in the first), ridicule me under circumstances where I couldn't respond, killa lecture-bureau contract Dick Gregory arranged for me (he wa under contract to the same bureau), and when I have him DC TV time he couldn't get with his second book (before I'd read it), a show I had, he had the gall to steal and misuse my own work on my own show! That one incident was more costly to us than I can now take the time to tell you, for it killed collaboration with some of the more powerful who, after that singel thing, refused to ever talk to me again.

Nobody does any real political thinking, not even Sylvia, who is probably the most brilliant and articulate of us. I am lost in respect for her, really. Admiration, too. But she is the creature of emotions and towering passions, as one must be to wrok with real sincerity in this field. She has done things she can't and doesn't understand, or won't let herself, that have hurt. She can have no awareness, for otherwise she'd not have. And today, though no fault of hers, she is out of it, not able to keep up, and still thinking in the notions of six years ago. So, when others go to her for advice, it is dated. And they take it, as one wouldxxxxxpx expect with the respect she deserves.

There are only so mnay things I can cope with (I've tried too many), only so many I haveany chance of doing. Right now I have tried to reduce this to two things: survive and get things on papers. Unless I do both I can can do nothing. The book I have just finished, in the hands of a dedicated publisher, could go wild-and there is no Kaplan treatment that could kill it with a real publisher. It, without comprise with integrity, can earn and expect support if there is helt behind it. Without it, it owuld be ignored. It is no longer possible for me to do with an undergrounder what I did with WW. I know the reality. But at least it would make a record. Ed, when I take the Mitchellisti to court and get a summary judgement against them and no paper in the country reports it, do you have to know anything else? When I pull the man-bites-dog and sue as my own lawyer, and the press is there and nothing appears? When I hold a press conference and attack Kleindienst in his own words and the Wash. Post has a reporter there and he files a full column and it gets killed?

I have to adjust to the realities. It will take years before the younger ones learn this. It forces me, as I see it, into the role in which, unhappily, I am. I just don't see any choice....In all real, meaningful terms I am alone, with no significant help of any kind from anybody. When I didn't have the 20¢ a page for Archives docs and had gone into debt to print WW, there is no signle critic who ever sent me so much as a single 20¢ to buy a

single page! Please keep this to yourself, for we are fractioned enough and she is uptight about it. But once when I was arguing with Sylvia, I chided her. She had at least $100 for that wretched Thornley, a out whom she stills knows nothing and wouldn't listen when I stipulated it had to be in confidence (I've done enough of an investigation of him). He used all or part of it in a successful campaign against me, aided by Lifton. But she never had a penny to for me spend at the Archives. Her respksne is correct, it is her money and she can spend it as she choses. But how am I supposed to feel about her election?...You have no way of imagining the ways in which those of means have in one way or another imposed upon me. I have to the degree I can isolated myself from most now. But I've been himiliated because of my poverty, ridiculed for it, as you heard Hanes do, robbed because of it, and I persist in doing the work to the degree I can. I can do no more.

Jerry right now is worried about my isolation from the rest of the critical community. Could it be real and permanent it would be the greatest blessing, for except for two yoing ones, nobody else is doing any work of any significance. I waste hours trying to help them. John Nichols alone took more time than the writing of a large book. Fensterwald has wasted more time for me than the writing of two books would require. You should have heard my usually silent wife when she gathered what Jerry had said from my end of that conversation! I have never had any real help from any critic, nor any financial help from any wealthy person. Only one person ever visits here and things that for us the groceries he consumes are a problem, and he is the youngest. When he leaves, his father, who is only a Sears salesman, always sends us enough to cover what the son has eaten. And right now I am about $1,600 behind in what I have to pay the bank on my indebtedness this year, with no prospect of getting it except from those who owe it to me, all of whom resist paying even a cent. On a minor level, Twice recently my wife has dunned Trent Gough for books he bought in 1967. Should she have to take the time, with all the work and worries she has, for this?

So, I try to give you a picture of the realities of our lives, the problems of doing any work, the kinds of factors that decide for me what I can do or at least try. Does it not seem at all strange to you that when the critics knew I was suing the government, not one offered even the filing costs of these suits? Bud, by the way, did pay those of the two he filed, and he is paying the costs of the spectro appeal, which he said he'd carry to the Supreme Court, thus I've given him a free hand-and he has fucked it up.

Can you imagine what my emotions cause me to do sometimes when these are the conditions under which I've lived for the past seven years, the grim today, as it was the grim everyday of that period?

Even the rich guy who has just doublecrossed on Post Mortem. He is a fine guy. He is also a miser, as I find most of the rich. They are always worried about being imposed upon. When he heard of the 1970 declassification, he offered to pay for a duplicate set for me. This would have enabled me to file one set as the declassification and one by subject. So, I ordered it. When he sent me his check, it was for half. He forced me to copyright the last part of PM immediately, because under the deal he was going to show parts to people whose help he was going to (poroperly) try and enlist. He promised to pay for the xeroxing costs. They were $52.00. The copyrighting costs, including travel, etc., came to less than $20.00. Tl this day he hasn't. Now he comes here, staus over jight, we feed him, take time, etc. When we had a rough night last week, trying to thrash things out, he drank more than a quart of wine. These are the most minor costs. But is any minor when you are flat broke?

These things are, I intend, between the two of us only. I am trying to give you an understanding of why I have cast myself in the role in which I am, why I think I have no meaningful alternative and perhaps to give you an understanding of why it may sometimes seem that I have misbehaved, said things perhsps I shouldn't, etc. And why my responses are so brief. The things you send, the clips, books and notes are quite valuable in keeping me informed. And the LBJ stuff on Bobby couldn't be more timely, because this rich guy has apparently sold Jerry and others on the notion that I am dishonest in my handling of this in PM. LBJ to the rescue. Many thanks. Sorry about the typos. Best regards,